The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accurate and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor including in the legislative committees, the judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
A BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1769 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 10

Sensational WMC Report Knocks Props From Demands For Manpower Draft

Washington, D. C.—A sensational official report, which knocks the props out of the military authorities' continued demands for a compulsory labor draft, has just been made public by the War Manpower Commission.

The report, prepared by Director E. G. Bowles of the WMC's Bureau of Manpower Utilization, makes these startling disclosures:

The amount of labor required for present and foreseeable war needs is less than in the most part already on the employment rolls of the country.

"A 5 to 10 per cent improvement in manpower utilization would be sufficient to provide all necessary labor.

"There is not a factory in this country which could not easily improve its utilization to this degree.

"Resulting action could add the equivalent of 500,000, to 800,000 to the labor force."

Mr. Bowles cited numerous specific instances of far greater increases in manpower utilization and productivity following surveys by his bureau.

His report provides a powerful argument for supporters of legislation now being debated in the Senate to empower the War Manpower Commission to investigate labor waste, overstaffing and other conditions which result in ineffective use of existing manpower.

"Absenteeism, turnover and misuse of labor are still widespread," Mr. Bowles declared in his report. "No amount of generalized campaigns to remedy this situation will keep workers in plants if the working conditions are fundamentally bad, if the facilities are primitive, or if the living conditions outside of working hours are detrimental.

"The causes of turnover and absenteeism have got to be singled out and treated plant by plant, often again, as the working conditions may be very good, but the use of the workers may be very wasteful. The supervision may be poor, provision for training workers may be lacking, the layout of the work too cumbersome, progressive upgrading may be overlooked, the job may be greatly overstaffed. In the last analysis, it is only on a plant by plant basis that these causes can be isolated and dealt with, for there is no single cause for absenteeism, turnover or wasted productivity.

"There is always some pattern of causes which must be traced out in each plant suffering from maladjustment. This has to be done by management and labor, either through their own efforts or with the assistance of competent and trained personnel brought in from the outside or supplied by Government services."

Mr. Bowles recommended that the National Management-Labor Policy Committee of the WMC "might very well be the spearhead of this expanded effort."

"Certainly," he said, "this committee could readily devise ways and means for drawing upon so rich a source of manpower. It is looked to by management and labor for leadership on all matters affecting manpower. This committee has national contact with regional and area Management-Labor, Committees and it, therefore, is in a unique position to provide constructive leadership."

Labor's Heroes Of Bastogne Urge Greater Production

Washington, D. C.—The War Department has brought three outstanding AFL heroes back from the battlefronts of Germany to tell their fellow union members in this country how urgent is the need for increased war production.

At the direction of Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson, these heroes will make a nation-wide tour of "critical" war plants to tell the workers about their battle experiences and appeal for greater effort on the production line to back up the armed forces.

Their records, as made public by the War Department, follow:

First Sgt. Thaddeus Maslowski, of Lockport, N. Y., member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, has taken part in battles in Normandy, Brittany, Luxembourg, and Belgium. He holds the Silver Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He was awarded the Purple Heart as a result of shrapnel wounds received from an enemy shell. His battalion participated in Gen. Patton's breakthrough in Brittany and later his outfit went to the rescue of the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne.

Technician 5th Grade Nicholas Forte, of Logansport, Ind., member of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, was one of that memorable band of fighting men in the 101st Airborne Division who triumphantly withstood the seige of Bastogne. Serving in a Glider Infantry Regiment, he helped to get food, medical supplies and ammunition to the beleaguered troops by parachute. His toughest experience in the war, came in Holland, where his outpost was surrounded by a hundred Nazis. Attacking with tanks and mortar fire, Forte and his companions killed forty of the enemy and captured seventeen.

Sgt. James E. Collect, of Niagara Falls, N. Y., member of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes Union, fought with the surrounded 101st Airborne Division throughout the "Battle of the Bulge." He wears the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster for his two battle wounds. A paratroop squad leader, he made his first combat jump in France six hours before American troops landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. He made another jump near Eindhoven, Holland, where he and his men were completely surrounded by the enemy for several days before they fought their way back to the Allied lines.

Our Freedom Threatened By Monopoly, Sen. O'Mahoney Tells Radio Forum

Washington, D. C.—The monopolistic grip of big business upon the nation's economy was graphically exposed by U. S. Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, of Wyoming, on the AFL's "America United" program over NBC March 4.

"Monopoly is the mortal enemy of both economic and political freedom," said the Senator. "When private power grows so great that its decisions control the opportunity for employment, it creates the conditions which bring about all-powerful government."

To illustrate the powerful hold of monopoly on American economy, Senator O'Mahoney cited the following figures:

"There are some 34 corporations in the United States each of which is the owner of assets in excess of one billion dollars. In 1944 the richest of these corporations owned property worth more than a billion dollars. There are only 6 states in the Union, the total assessed valuation of which is greater than the assets of this single corporation.

"There are 11 sovereign states in each of which the assessed valuation is below one billion dollars, according to the statistics of 1940. And the assessed valuation of all property in all of these states together and we have added the figures of the Insurance Company of New York and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

"Look at it from another point of view. The five wealthiest industrial corporations in America, General Motors, American Telephone and Telegraph, United States Steel, Bethlehem Steel and General Electric, employed in 1943 a total of 1,536,691 persons. If we were to add to this the number employed by the next five industrial and railroad corporations we would have a total of 2,047,689. There are only 23 states which have a population in excess of two millions.

"Finally, it is estimated by the Committee on Economic Development, a corporation formed of business men independent of government, that there are three million businesses in the United States of which 35,000 employ between 100 and 1000 each and 2300 employ 1000 persons each. That means that less than 1½ per cent of all of the businesses in the United States employ 55 per cent of the workers.

"Thus, in cold figures, are set forth the results of economic concentration. This is the reason for the growth of government. This is the reason for the sad plight of little business. This is the cause of the farm problem. Economic concentration has the hands of a few big enterprises makes the struggle of the little enterprise constantly more difficult. With the latter a proportion of our people dependent upon the big organizations and with little business lending a precarious existence, the market for agricultural products is likewise narrowed and made unstable.

"Economic freedom and political liberty go hand in hand. Monopoly and concentration of economic power inevitably produce authoritarian government.

"If the people of the world want to maintain political liberty they must make up their minds to preserve economic freedom. To this end the essential first of all they take effective steps to halt the concentration of economic power by the monopolistic forces or development of monopoly."

Boris Shishkin, representing the AFL on the program, pointed out that 90 per cent of prime war contracts have been awarded to 200 big corporations. He warned that monopoly tends toward artificial maintenance of high prices and restriction of production.

George Wilson, representing the American Farm Bureau Federation, drew from Senator O'Mahoney a recommendation that the proper procedure in dealing with monopoly is not to tear down big business but to offer help and incentive to small businesses in order to enable them to compete on more even terms with the huge corporations.

Dr. Emerson F. Schmidt, representing the United States Chamber of Commerce, pointed out that in the past the Government itself has sanctioned and even helped to create monopolies. He asked the Senator to explain in what way the big corporations have abused their power.

Senator O'Mahoney replied that it was not a question of abuse but of the danger inherent in the very size and strength of the monopoly. He said: "What 1¼ per cent of the employers of the country employ 55 per cent of the workers, it is obvious that a decision by the executives of this small group of employers affects millions of people throughout the United States, not only the businesses themselves, but every farm, every worker and every business in the country, too."

Boost All Wage Rates 11%, AFL Asks In Report To FDR

Low-Paid Workers Given Increase Of Five Cents An Hour By NWLB

Washington, D. C.—Workers on the bottom of the pay ladder, who have suffered most from the skyrocketing cost of living, will find a slightly easier to make ends meet as a result of a National War Labor Board ruling which permits a boost in minimum wages to 55 cents an hour.

Labor members of the board went along with the decision as the best obtainable now, though they have been fighting for a "floor" of 72 cents. Anything below that during the war is a starvation wage, they contended.

Heretofore, 50 cents an hour has been the board's "sub-standard" yardstick. WLB officials estimated that the addition of 5 cents to the base may benefit as many as 4,000,000 workers.

Regional boards are authorized to approve applications by employers, or by employers and unions jointly, to apply the 55-cent minimum, but where ceiling prices might be affected by the wage increase, then the raise can't go into effect until sanctioned by Economic Stabilization Director Fred M. Vinson.

NWLB Members Insist Raise Is Justified by Increase In Living Costs

Washington, D. C.—Appealing directly to President Roosevelt, AFL members of the National War Labor Board demanded a general wage increase of 11 per cent immediately.

"Since the war wage rates have increased by 19 per cent," the AFL group declared, "the cost of living has increased—based upon official figures —by 30 per cent. To correct the maladjustment between wages and the cost of living—which measured by the same standard that was used when the Little Steel Formula was adopted—an adjustment of approximately 11 per cent is justifiable."

The AFL petition charged that the public members of the board had perpetrated a deception on labor and the nation by changing the "measuring rod" on wage rates when they originally reported to the President that no change in the Little Steel Formula was justified.

Emphasizing the need of establishing wage increases for the war period which would compensate workers for the loss of overtime pay when war production ceases, the AFL members urged the President to restore collective bargaining "in fact and not after victory in Europe and provide that minimum pay be raised for workers in those industries in which collective bargaining was not restored.

"We are not only sorely wearied and harassed by the expedients and formulas which have been substituted for the basic principle which guides collective bargaining," the labor group said, "but we are appalled by the consequences of a policy to cripple us in solving the reconversion and post-war problems.

"Wages are more than compensation for service rendered. They determine the kind of homes workers live in, the way their lives will be conditioned, the opportunities their children will have, the recreations they can make against emergencies. Wages contribute 75 per cent of the buying power to retail markets. The total buying power determines the levels of production and therefore national well-being."

George Meany and Matthew Woll and their alternates, Robert J. Watt and James A. Brownlow, signed the report.

They identified collective bargaining with the retention of America's free institutions, warning the President that the danger of the totalitarian state does not end with the war, but "here looms in the economic field."

In order to stem the trend toward totalitarianism, the report added:

"Labor must be ready to enter reconversion and post-war periods with a wage rate that would assure adequate purchasing power. We must have those rates established in advance."

Expressing the hope that employers would cooperate in this objective of labor, the AFL members said they faced these alternatives:

1. Cooperation between management and labor in returning to collective bargaining to establish now the wage rates that can undergird our return to civilian production; or,

2. Payment of higher taxes to government out of funds withheld from workers, resulting in under-capacity production, under-employment and reduced purchasing power so that the Government must provide work.

DRIVE FOR POST-WAR BAN ON CHILD LABOR OPENS

New York City.—Action now to prohibit employment of children under 18 years of age is necessary to protect both children and adults after the war, according to the National Child Labor Committee. The organization has issued several thousand copies of a pamphlet, "The Case for Sixteen Year Employment Laws," which declares that present laws and youth can't compete with adult employment.

The pamphlet will be sent free to individuals and to national and local organizations for study in state campaigns to raise the age limit for child labor in the post-war period from 14 to 16 during school hours, according to Mrs. Gertrude Folks Zimand, executive secretary of the committee.

Metal Trades Warn Navy Commandants Against Interfering With Unions

Washington, D. C.—Undersecretary of the Navy Ralph A. Bard was urged by the AFL Metal Trades Department to halt interference by commandants of navy yards with the internal affairs of unions.

More and more commandants have been issuing orders to foremen and supervisory employes—even though they have been union members for many years—from holding office in unions or engaging in any other union activity. Some commandants have extended the restriction to non-supervisory employes and to "straw bosses" who have little or no authority.

The ban has stirred widespread resentment among navy yard workers. President M. P. Alfaz of District No. 44, International Association of Machinists, protested vehemently.

Secretary-Treasurer James J. McEntee of the Metal Trades Department followed with a direct appeal to Bard to "rectify" the situation.

"Men who are promoted to supervisory are selected because of ability," McEntee wrote Bard. "They have the right to continue to hold office in a union simply means that either they must refuse supervisory appointments or the union is deprived of men whose record has shown them to be capable leaders.

"If, as we believe, the Navy Department is sympathetic toward unionism, I am sure you will find a way to remove any barriers which stand in the path of the proper functioning of unions. Paralyzing the participation of supervisors in unions is definitely a serious injury.

"We believe it is unjust to deprive the labor movement of the contributions of some of its ablest workers. Also, it is unnecessary, because the supervisors will serve neutral and impartially on the basis of cooperation, and it is highly inexpedient for a department which is the government's to take backward step in contrast with private industry."

Housing—Congress Must Lead

By HARRY C. BATES

Chairman AFL Housing Committee

(We present herewith the last of a series of articles by Mr. Bates, President of the Bricklayers, Masons and Plasterers' Union, entitled "A housing problems with which he is expertly familiar.)

We have a tremendous job on our hands. It's got to be done. It's got to be done and to do it right calls for realism, for complete agreement regarding the objective and for real teamwork on the part of all concerned. To have such teamwork we must have the rules of the game clearly defined and agreed to in advance. To enable us to win our goal there must be leadership and drive. It is up to Congress to provide that leadership and to give the nation a comprehensive program for which it asks.

To be realistic in our efforts we must be fully aware of the difficulties and limitations of the task. We must not be led astray by false promises of miracles or by cheap quack remedies. The foremost among the realities facing us is that stable full employment of incomes for wage earners are the only source of a large-scale housing market. Unless wage incomes are stabilized at a much higher level than they were before the war, no formula and no device will enable us to bring good privately built housing within the financial reach of the great mass of our wage earners.

We must also be realistic about how the job can best be planned, how it can be done and what kind of homes it will provide. The strength of post-war housing must be sought in its scope but it cannot be divorced from practical experience. The planning it calls for is practical planning. It must reckon in dollars and cents, including the dollars and cents in the weekly pay envelope. Armchair builders and parlor planners will not build postwar housing. What lasting advances we make in providing more and better homes will be brought by the combined skill, experience and ingenuity of American enterprise and given reality by those who have the skill and the know how of design, development and building.

We must be realistic also in making sure that we provide the kind of housing that the people need and that the people themselves want. In meeting the demand of the people, full use should be made of all modern and new technical advances. We should recognize, however, the plain truth that the average American family does not want a dehydrated home and prefers to live in solidly built, safe and durable dwellings, not in flimsy zootch boxes.

There must be candid realism also in our approach to the housing costs. The biggest single cost of home ownership in the case of a mortgage is interest rates is the most important step to lower the cost of home ownership. Reduction in construction costs must be achieved, but without sacrificing the minimum standards of health, safety and durability. In the period immediately following the war, control of prices on building materials should be continued. The accumulated pressure of unsatisfied demand is far too great to avoid runaway building material prices unless they are held in check.

We must be realistic, finally, about the related responsibility of the local, state and federal governments in the post-war rebuilding and redevelopment of our cities. Each must assume a full share. The partnership must be one will succeed. The job of local development and the operating tasks of development and construction is the prerogative of the local community, but that does not relieve the state and the federal government assumes its full responsibility for financial aid commensurate with the community's better housing for all, a need deeply recognized by the whole nation.

The Housing Committee of the American Federation of Labor has reviewed and restudied the housing field in 1956, at the end of the first ten-year period following the war, the annual physical need for urban residential housing will total 15,600,000 dwelling units. This is a conservative estimate. We call for a ten-year program of housing construction in which the average rate will be 1,500,000 units per year. Such a program would enable us to meet most of the minimum need. It would could be readily kept up in subsequent years. While we would have attained such a high annual volume of home building, we can attain it, if we decide to attain it and prepare to attain it.

Full volume of residential construction, therefore, can and should be reached within five years following the war. Let us set that volume as our goal. It should be our goal for full employment. The American Federation of Labor believes this minimum program for meeting the accumulated housing need to be the least expensive, the most conservative and the most powerful generator of post-war employment.

Green Appeals To All AFL Workers To Contribute To Red Cross Fund

Washington, D. C.—In a radio address broadcast throughout the nation by transcription, AFL President William Green appealed to the seven million members of the Federation to contribute generously to the American Red Cross War Fund this month.

Mr. Green, who is a member of the Board of Incorporators of the Red Cross, said:

"The Red Cross has never failed those it serves. We at home must not fail the Red Cross. We must respond by contributing generously and in full measure to the 1945 Red Cross War Fund this March.

"No matter what the duration of the present war may be, the financial needs of the Red Cross will be greater than ever before. I respectfully urge every member of the American Federation of Labor to cooperate with the AFL's official relief arm, the Labor League for Human Rights, in the campaign for funds.

"When possible, increase your contribution to this worthy cause. We are determined to win a victory for democracy, freedom and justice. Let us see to it that the American Red Cross is supplied with sufficient funds to meet every call for service, to measure up to the needs and requirements of the tragic situation which prevails throughout the world."

Rail Workers Win Vacations

Chicago.—AFL railway unions, representing 1,100,000 "non-operating" rail workers, won a greatly improved vacation-with-pay schedule.

Climaxing a long battle, the unions and carriers concluded with the carriers under which the present six-day annual paid vacations, applying to most of the employes, will be doubled for those who have worked on the railroads five years or more.

About 800,000 employes are covered by the new pact. Three hundred thousand others in the "non-operating" group—the clerical and telegraph employes—have had a longer vacation plan for some time and are not affected by the change.

Conciliation efforts of Frank P. Douglass, member of the National Mediation Board, helped "break the ice" and bring the negotiations to a head. The agreement, which was approved by the National Railway Labor Panel, will be effective retroactively to January 1.

An application for approval has been submitted jointly to the panel by the unions and the carriers. A quick "okay" is anticipated, since, as pointed out in the application, provisions of the agreement do not conflict with the government's wage stabilization program.

BOILERMAKERS OFFICIAL DIES IN KANSAS CITY

Kansas City, Kans.—William E. Walter, secretary-treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, died at his home here after a sudden heart attack.

Though ill for several months, he continued his duties without a letup until the end came. He would have reached the age of 64 on April 21, but looked years younger. He had been a member of the Boilermakers for more than 40 years.

As a young man in East St. Louis, Ill., Mr. Walter organized Lodge 363 of the Boilermakers. He became business representative of the lodge and from time to time served the International in various capacities.

In recognition of his ability, the 1936 convention of the Boilermakers elected him a vice president. Six years later, on the death of Secretary-Treasurer Charles P. Scott he was appointed to the vacancy by President J. A. Franklin, who is now president emeritus.

He was elected to the position at the 1937 convention and re-elected in 1944, each time without opposition.

THE AFL PRESENTS . . . .

"AMERICA UNITED"
• At 1:15 P.M., EWT, Over NBC

Date	Guest	Topic	Panel Members
Mar. 11	Sen. Wagner	Housing	Boris Shishkin, AFL T. S. Fitzpatrick, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Paul Sifton, National Farmers Union
Mar. 18	George Meany	Wage Policy	Phil Pearl, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Albert S. Goss, National Grange
Mar. 25	David Lilienthal	More TVA's?	Robert J. Watt, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Ed. O'Neal, Am. Farm Bureau Fed.
April 1	Solicitor General Fahy	Tolerance	Phil Pearl, AFL Emerson P. Schmidt, U. S. Chamber of Commerce Paul Sifton, National Farmers Union

• Because a number of radio stations are carrying the program by transcription at another hour or even at a later date, please consult the radio listings in your local paper for the exact time "America United" goes on the air in your community.

TEAMSTERS HELP DRIVE FOR TRUCK MANPOWER

Washington, D. C.—Labor shortage problems in the trucking industry are being attacked through joint efforts of labor, industry and government, the Office of Defense Transportation said.

At a recent ODT meeting, representatives of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and several trucking associations made plans to set up local committees with labor-industry-ODT representation to cut down loading time and eliminate empty mileage.

AFL spokesmen at the meeting were Dave Beck, Ray McCall and Fred Tobin of the Teamsters union.

NEW AFL RADIO SERIES OPENS APRIL 7 ON CBS

Washington, D. C.—Watch for the AFL's new series of radio programs which opens on a nation-wide Columbia Broadcasting System network on April 7.

Beginning that date the AFL will sponsor thirteen weekly shows on CBS, to be broadcast at 9:45 p.m., E.W.T.

The new series will start immediately after AFL sponsorship of the "America United" program over NBC ends on April 1. It will be entirely different from the forum programs presented on NBC.

On July 7 the AFL will inaugurate a final series of twenty-six weekly broadcasts over the Blue Network which will be heard at 6:45 p.m. E.W.T., each Saturday.